

MEMORANDUM FOR: Brigadier General Harold E. Watson
Chief, Air Technical Intelligence Center
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base

THROUGH: Director of Intelligence
Headquarters, USAF
Washington 25, D.C.

SUBJECT: Request for Data on Various Versions of BISON

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1. At the Fourth [REDACTED] Aircraft Production Conference held in Washington, D.C. during the week of 5-9 November 1956, the participating intelligence agencies exchanged views on Soviet heavy bomber production. It was found that the range of estimated BISON production among agencies was narrow. The feeling was unanimous that production of the aircraft was still in the experimental stage.

2. Within the framework of general agreement on BISON estimates, there was uncertainty regarding the number and significance of visible external BISON modifications. One analysis of these modifications has led, first, to a possible lessening of the degree of confidence placed in [REDACTED] information and, second, to the small absolute, but fairly substantial relative, differences that exist among the estimates of the various intelligence agencies. These differences are of considerable concern to ORR because of the obvious impact of BISON production on economic cost analysis and assessments of economic capabilities.

3. Because of the critical nature of BISON production estimates to the over-all economic intelligence objectives of CIA, ORR is undertaking a complete reappraisal of the BISON production situation. This reappraisal will serve as a basis for any changes deemed necessary in the economic estimates, and possibly as a test [REDACTED] In line with these

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objectives the following information is requested from AFOIN-4:

a. BISON photographs of the original BISON and of later BISONs showing subsequent modifications. The dates of photography for each BISON version should be included.

b. Three-view drawings and detailed technical descriptions of the configurations to show the manner in which each BISON version varies from the others.

c. A list showing how many of each BISON version has been seen and the dates on which they were seen.

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to the different BISON versions.

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d. ORR has placed a high priority on the re-examination of the BISON production situation. The materials requested in par. 3 above will greatly facilitate the project. Upon completion of the re-examination ORR would be pleased to disseminate the conclusions to AFOIN-4.

OTTO E. GUTHE
Assistant Director
Research and Reports

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